



USAID | TAJIKISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Tajik Journalism Sheds Old Skin

A USAID study tour helps introduce modern ways to teach journalism in Tajikistan

Journalism trainer Murolot Sotiev hopes that soon, Tajikistan's students will be able to study this profession using modern methodologies, the way he saw being done in the U.S. Last year, Mr. Sotiev took part in the "Journalism Professors" study tour in the U.S., organized by the USAID Community Connections program, and returned home determined to introduce new approaches in his country.



Journalists at the training in the summer camp. Kairakum reservoir, Northern Tajikistan, 2007.

"Journalism professors want to move away from old curricula and methods of teaching journalism".

- Mr. Sotiev, alumni of the USAID Community Connections program.

A long-term member of the country's Union of Journalists and a columnist at National Information Agency "Khovar" and a local newspaper "New Khatlon," Mr. Sotiev is well aware of the shortages in the journalism training in Tajikistan. Journalism departments across the country are still using the Soviet style of teaching that focuses on theory and memorization, and virtually no attention is paid to practical aspects of the profession.

The USAID study tour showed to Mr. Sotiev how journalists are trained in the U.S., and he was eager to rally his fellow instructors in Tajikistan to embrace the new ideas.

Mr. Sotiev organized ten-day training for Tajik journalism professors on new approaches of teaching journalism and up-to-date curriculum design. The alumni invited professors to immerse into the world of journalism at a summer camp at Kairakum reservoir in northern Tajikistan. Twenty professors from Journalism departments in Dushanbe, Khatlon, Sogd, and Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast spent ten days together learning innovations in teaching methodology and debating how to adapt American best practices and procedures in their departments. Mr. Sotiev brought lots of handouts and new materials on how to conduct modern lectures, practical exercises and how to network with colleagues in the United States. Participants also compared American and Russian teaching methods with a visiting professor from Ural State University in Russia.

As the camp drew to its end, professors worked on a new journalism curricula for universities, with the eventual goal of updating the state-mandated curriculum to meet international standards.

Mr. Sotiev feels there will be concrete results from the summer camp: "After program completion, participants had lots of ideas on how to develop journalistic curricula in the future. Journalism professors want to move away from old curricula and methods of teaching journalism".